431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
586 contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
583 the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.) than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
583 to make the gifts prescribed by custom.

"The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

who did live at the palace, only a small minority prepared the ruler's meals and shared his bed. Dim Delobson reports that Mogho Naba Kom II (1905–42) had thirty-seven wives. His son, Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57), had twenty.[24] The present Mogho Naba, Kougri, recently married according to Western tradition and is officially monogamous.[25] There seems to be a general trend toward fewer wives among Mossi chiefs.

Mossi rulers never married for the purpose of forming state alliances, and their marriages had no political significance. The Mogho Naba's marriages were exogamous with regard to the royal lineage and to his mother's minimal lineage. Aside from these restrictions, however, the Mogho Naba could marry women from any Mossi lineage or group, including serfs, slaves, and foreign populations. It is said that when Mogho Naba Sanum (1850–90) despaired of having an heir by a Mossi woman, he took a Fulani wife.[26]

The Mogho Naba had no formal wedding ceremony. The task of introducing a new wife to the royal harem fell to the Pughtiema. She and her assistants welcomed the wife in a prescribed fashion. First they shaved all the hair from her body. They then bathed her in warm water to which shea butter and ritual herbs had been added, and during the bath they recited the ruler's genealogy to impress her with her new status.[27] The Pughtiema advised her on the need for proper deportment, and warned her that adultery was punished by death. To close the ceremony, a smith fastened to the girl's wrists and ankles the silver or brass bracelets that identified her as a wife of the Mogho Naba. If the bride was still a child, she was often allowed to return to her father's house until she reached childbearing age. If she was past the age of puberty, her marriage was consummated without further ceremony, and she joined the ranks of the ruler's wives.

The wives who lived in the palace were divided into three groups. The first group included the wives who lived with the Pughtiema in a section of the palace harem called the *zaka sanga* ("large courtyard"). These women were all past childbearing age and no longer received nocturnal visits from the Mogho Naba. They had their own fields in the vicinity of the palace and cultivated them with the aid of the samande-kamba, the pages they had adopted, and their own children. The women of the second group, those of the *zugbilin* ("small courtyard"), were mostly in their thirties or forties and still sexually active. They received occasional visits from the Mogho Naba, but fewer than his younger wives. These women also cultivated their fields with the help of the young men of the court.

The third group of wives, the *dogunba* ("keepers of the household"), was the most important. The dogunba prepared the ruler's meals and satis-